

TURKEY

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Refugees' Right to Education

- An enabling policy and legislative environment **guarantees access to education** for refugees: the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for ensuring that **all refugee children** enjoy access to schools and has taken steps to remove administrative barriers to enrolment.
- Refugee/asylum-seeker children registered with the authorities can **enrol in Turkish schools free of charge**.
- MoNE approved the establishment of “**temporary education centres**” (TECs) to enable Syrian refugee children to continue their education. TECs offer instruction in Arabic, are staffed by Syrian volunteer teachers and use of a modified form of the Syrian curriculum. They are present in all camps in southeast Turkey, and MoNE has approved over 350 to operate in urban areas hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees.
- MoNE is now placing greater emphasis on the **inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish schools** and has increased the numbers of hours of Turkish language teaching in TECs.
- In October 2016, for the fourth consecutive academic year, the Council of Ministers **waived higher education fees in State universities for Syrian students** for the 2016-2017 academic year. In 2015, the Turkish government subsidized the tuition costs of approximately 1,600 Syrians in Turkish universities. Refugees of other nationalities may attend university, but are required to pay the same tuition fees as foreign students.

Refugee Children's and Youth's Access to Education

- **40% of Syrian refugee children are out of school**; enrolment is higher in camps than urban areas.
- The **number of Syrian children enrolled in Turkish schools and TECs rose** to almost 500,000 in 2016: Over 160,000 Syrian refugee children are enrolled in Turkish schools, with the rest in TECs.
- **Non-Syrian refugees can enrol in Turkish schools** in the cities and provinces in which they are registered.
- 15,000 Syrian refugee youth are enrolled in Turkish universities, representing less than 3% of the 18-25-year-old age cohort. Higher education in Syria was reported to be 20% before the war.
- The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) has provided **scholarships** to over 2,300 Syrian refugees. UNHCR provides 818 DAFI scholarships and 354 scholarships funded by other sources.
- **All refugees may enrol in free Turkish language and skills-training courses** offered by MoNE's Public Education Centres (Halk Egitim): These courses do not lead to formal vocational qualifications, but are sufficiently advanced to allow graduates to use their skills to support income generation and self-reliance.

UNHCR Strategy and Activities

- The **education sector response is led by MoNE**, with the support of UN agencies, including UNHCR: UNHCR's education response is designed and delivered in close collaboration with the MoNE, YTB and UNICEF. UNICEF and UNHCR ensure the complementarity of their programmes through close coordination and through a division of roles and responsibilities, **with UNHCR focusing on promoting refugees' access**

to the national education system, providing Turkish language programmes and skills training, and promoting higher education access.

- The education strategy considers the needs of refugees of different ages, linking education opportunities to **durable solutions and increased self-reliance**. Higher education access and meaningful skills training for refugee youth underpins UNHCR's education strategy.
- UNHCR consistently **advocates for the inclusion of refugee children in the national education system** to provide sustainable, predictable access to certified education, and welcomes MoNE's efforts to include refugee children in Turkish schools. In 2016 and 2017, 900,000 Turkish language textbooks were purchased for MoNE's use in schools/TECs (books cover the first two levels of basic Turkish proficiency).
- UNHCR and UNICEF, as sector co-leads, **provide technical support** to education-focused NGOs and organizations engaged in refugee outreach to ensure the quality of **counselling on the educational opportunities** available to refugees, and procedures for accessing these services.
- Around 270 urban and 24 camp-based TECs were supported with **teaching support materials** developed jointly with the Ministry to enhance the quality of education offered, and 8,000 teachers were provided with stationery items required for educational administration and lesson preparation in 2015 and 2016.
- **Non-Syrian refugee children** who can show proof of enrolment in Turkish schools **receive twice-yearly cash grants**.
- In partnership with YTB, 818 students were awarded DAFI scholarships in 2016/17, and additional scholarships be awarded in 2017. At present, Turkey is the largest DAFI programme in the world. A further 354 undergraduate and post-graduate scholarships were provided through the *Türkiye Bursları* programme delivered by YTB.
- 1,600 advanced **Turkish language scholarships** were offered to high school graduates to enable them to reach the language proficiency levels required for admission to Turkish universities. Students in urban areas also receive a cash stipend while attending courses to cover transportation and study-related costs.
- **Language and skills training courses** are offered through community centres, while vocational and skills training programmes are supported through the Livelihoods programme. UNHCR will collaborate closely with MoNE to deliver these programmes through state institutions in 2017 and beyond, subsidising the costs of these programmes to the state.
- **UNHCR co-leads the southeast Turkey Education Working Group with UNICEF** and plays a **key role in the 3RP sector strategy**. Monthly WG meetings are held in Gaziantep. UNHCR also coordinates a technical working group for higher education scholarship providers and will assist in the establishment of a higher education working group with the co-leadership of government counterparts.

Challenges

- Despite positive national legislation and practices, enrolment in formal and higher education programmes remains low: **lack of knowledge of educational options available** to refugees, **prioritization of spending on basic necessities over education**, and **dependence on children to contribute to household income** are all barriers. **Language proficiency** is also an obstacle to enrolment in Turkish schools/universities, as is the fear of **social exclusion** and **harassment**. Demand for schooling remains high, however **supply of places in TECs and national schools does not match demand** in many provinces, with many operating close to capacity.
- Skills-building and language courses are only attended by a fraction of the refugee youth: **lack of awareness of available services** remains a barrier to participating and there is insufficient civil society capacity to meet demand. **Language proficiency** also limits participation in MoNE's skills-building courses.

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